

556

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 22, 2017

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Received & Inspected

JUN 03 2017

FCC Mail Room

Dear Chairman Pai:

In March, under your leadership, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted rules for its reverse auction of remaining funds under the Connect America Fund (CAF). We look forward to the Commission quickly completing its next steps, and we oppose any efforts or petitions to delay or alter implementation of these rules.

We applaud your efforts to extend broadband service to unserved areas of Missouri. In adopting its final rules for the CAF reverse auction, the FCC conducted a thorough review of a detailed and extensive record. The rules devised by the Commission are sound, and represent the best way to ensure all broadband technologies can bid competitively. We appreciate your work to strike a cost-effective, balanced approach among stakeholders to ensure highest possible speeds to the greatest number of unserved, rural communities. There is still work to be done to finalize auction procedures, and we oppose any petitions to delay the FCC's work or alter the methodology adopted by the Commission in March.

We appreciate your commitment to closing the digital divide in rural Missouri. The CAF auction rules are essential to this effort, and we look forward to the FCC quickly completing its next steps so rural Missourians can finally realize the benefits of broadband.

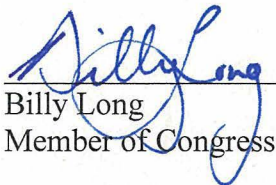
Sincerely,




Roy Blunt
United States Senator



Claire McCaskill
United States Senator



Billy Long
Member of Congress



Sam Graves
Member of Congress

Vicky Hartzler

Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress

Jason Smith

Jason Smith
Member of Congress

Blaine Luetkemeyer

Blaine Luetkemeyer
Member of Congress

Ann Wagner

Ann Wagner
Member of Congress

Cc:

The Honorable Mignon Clyburn
The Honorable Michael O'Rielly



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

July 18, 2017

The Honorable Sam Graves
U.S. House of Representatives
1135 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Graves:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's Connect America Fund (CAF) Phase II competitive bidding process. I agree that moving the auction process forward is an important part of our efforts to close the digital divide. Your views will be entered into the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

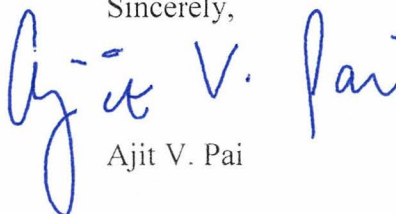
In my first remarks to FCC staff as Chairman on January 24, I declared that my highest priority would be making sure every American who wants Internet access can get it. As you well know, if you live in rural America, there's a better than 1-in-4 chance that you lack access to fixed high-speed broadband at home, compared to a 1-in-50 probability in our cities. The bottom line is this: Rural Americans deserve the same digital access as those living in more urban areas.

That's why I was pleased to announce that August will be Rural Broadband Month at the FCC. Our agenda for the open meeting on August 3 will feature several items that will help bridge the digital divide, including a Public Notice to initiate the pre-auction process for the CAF Phase II Auction.

Following the Commission's bipartisan vote on February 23, the auction will offer almost \$2 billion over the next ten years to broadband providers that commit to offer voice and broadband services to fixed locations in unserved high-cost areas in our country. As you note, the auction rules are structured to induce new entrants to participate—competitive entrants like wireless Internet service providers, small-town cable operators, and electric utilities. The *CAF II Auction Order* adopted auction weights designed to give every bidder—no matter what technology they use—a meaningful opportunity to compete for federal funds, while ensuring the best value for the American taxpayer. With this Public Notice, we are seeking comment on the procedures to be used during this auction. Moving forward now will put us on track to conduct the auction in 2018.

I appreciate your interest in this matter and I look forward to continue working with you as the Commission moves towards holding the CAF Phase II reverse auction. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

July 18, 2017

The Honorable Roy Blunt
United States Senate
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Blunt:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's Connect America Fund (CAF) Phase II competitive bidding process. I agree that moving the auction process forward is an important part of our efforts to close the digital divide. Your views will be entered into the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

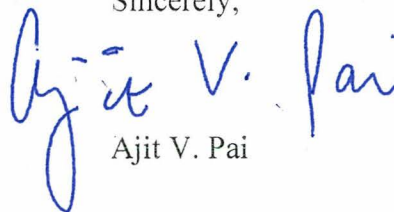
In my first remarks to FCC staff as Chairman on January 24, I declared that my highest priority would be making sure every American who wants Internet access can get it. As you well know, if you live in rural America, there's a better than 1-in-4 chance that you lack access to fixed high-speed broadband at home, compared to a 1-in-50 probability in our cities. The bottom line is this: Rural Americans deserve the same digital access as those living in more urban areas.

That's why I was pleased to announce that August will be Rural Broadband Month at the FCC. Our agenda for the open meeting on August 3 will feature several items that will help bridge the digital divide, including a Public Notice to initiate the pre-auction process for the CAF Phase II Auction.

Following the Commission's bipartisan vote on February 23, the auction will offer almost \$2 billion over the next ten years to broadband providers that commit to offer voice and broadband services to fixed locations in unserved high-cost areas in our country. As you note, the auction rules are structured to induce new entrants to participate—competitive entrants like wireless Internet service providers, small-town cable operators, and electric utilities. The *CAF II Auction Order* adopted auction weights designed to give every bidder—no matter what technology they use—a meaningful opportunity to compete for federal funds, while ensuring the best value for the American taxpayer. With this Public Notice, we are seeking comment on the procedures to be used during this auction. Moving forward now will put us on track to conduct the auction in 2018.

I appreciate your interest in this matter and I look forward to continue working with you as the Commission moves towards holding the CAF Phase II reverse auction. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,


Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

July 18, 2017

The Honorable Vicky Hartzler
U.S. House of Representatives
2235 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Hartzler:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's Connect America Fund (CAF) Phase II competitive bidding process. I agree that moving the auction process forward is an important part of our efforts to close the digital divide. Your views will be entered into the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

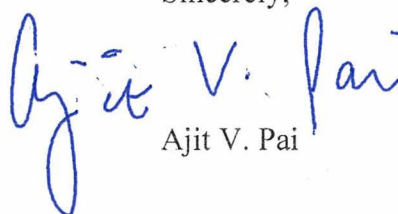
In my first remarks to FCC staff as Chairman on January 24, I declared that my highest priority would be making sure every American who wants Internet access can get it. As you well know, if you live in rural America, there's a better than 1-in-4 chance that you lack access to fixed high-speed broadband at home, compared to a 1-in-50 probability in our cities. The bottom line is this: Rural Americans deserve the same digital access as those living in more urban areas.

That's why I was pleased to announce that August will be Rural Broadband Month at the FCC. Our agenda for the open meeting on August 3 will feature several items that will help bridge the digital divide, including a Public Notice to initiate the pre-auction process for the CAF Phase II Auction.

Following the Commission's bipartisan vote on February 23, the auction will offer almost \$2 billion over the next ten years to broadband providers that commit to offer voice and broadband services to fixed locations in unserved high-cost areas in our country. As you note, the auction rules are structured to induce new entrants to participate—competitive entrants like wireless Internet service providers, small-town cable operators, and electric utilities. The *CAF II Auction Order* adopted auction weights designed to give every bidder—no matter what technology they use—a meaningful opportunity to compete for federal funds, while ensuring the best value for the American taxpayer. With this Public Notice, we are seeking comment on the procedures to be used during this auction. Moving forward now will put us on track to conduct the auction in 2018.

I appreciate your interest in this matter and I look forward to continue working with you as the Commission moves towards holding the CAF Phase II reverse auction. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 18, 2017

The Honorable Billy Long
U.S. House of Representatives
2454 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Long:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's Connect America Fund (CAF) Phase II competitive bidding process. I agree that moving the auction process forward is an important part of our efforts to close the digital divide. Your views will be entered into the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

In my first remarks to FCC staff as Chairman on January 24, I declared that my highest priority would be making sure every American who wants Internet access can get it. As you well know, if you live in rural America, there's a better than 1-in-4 chance that you lack access to fixed high-speed broadband at home, compared to a 1-in-50 probability in our cities. The bottom line is this: Rural Americans deserve the same digital access as those living in more urban areas.

That's why I was pleased to announce that August will be Rural Broadband Month at the FCC. Our agenda for the open meeting on August 3 will feature several items that will help bridge the digital divide, including a Public Notice to initiate the pre-auction process for the CAF Phase II Auction.

Following the Commission's bipartisan vote on February 23, the auction will offer almost \$2 billion over the next ten years to broadband providers that commit to offer voice and broadband services to fixed locations in unserved high-cost areas in our country. As you note, the auction rules are structured to induce new entrants to participate—competitive entrants like wireless Internet service providers, small-town cable operators, and electric utilities. The *CAF II Auction Order* adopted auction weights designed to give every bidder—no matter what technology they use—a meaningful opportunity to compete for federal funds, while ensuring the best value for the American taxpayer. With this Public Notice, we are seeking comment on the procedures to be used during this auction. Moving forward now will put us on track to conduct the auction in 2018.

I appreciate your interest in this matter and I look forward to continue working with you as the Commission moves towards holding the CAF Phase II reverse auction. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

July 18, 2017

The Honorable Blaine Luetkemeyer
U.S. House of Representatives
2230 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Luetkemeyer:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's Connect America Fund (CAF) Phase II competitive bidding process. I agree that moving the auction process forward is an important part of our efforts to close the digital divide. Your views will be entered into the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

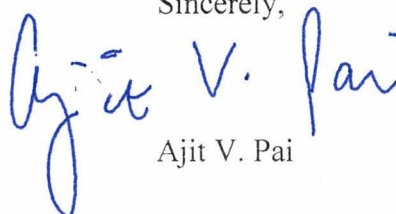
In my first remarks to FCC staff as Chairman on January 24, I declared that my highest priority would be making sure every American who wants Internet access can get it. As you well know, if you live in rural America, there's a better than 1-in-4 chance that you lack access to fixed high-speed broadband at home, compared to a 1-in-50 probability in our cities. The bottom line is this: Rural Americans deserve the same digital access as those living in more urban areas.

That's why I was pleased to announce that August will be Rural Broadband Month at the FCC. Our agenda for the open meeting on August 3 will feature several items that will help bridge the digital divide, including a Public Notice to initiate the pre-auction process for the CAF Phase II Auction.

Following the Commission's bipartisan vote on February 23, the auction will offer almost \$2 billion over the next ten years to broadband providers that commit to offer voice and broadband services to fixed locations in unserved high-cost areas in our country. As you note, the auction rules are structured to induce new entrants to participate—competitive entrants like wireless Internet service providers, small-town cable operators, and electric utilities. The *CAF II Auction Order* adopted auction weights designed to give every bidder—no matter what technology they use—a meaningful opportunity to compete for federal funds, while ensuring the best value for the American taxpayer. With this Public Notice, we are seeking comment on the procedures to be used during this auction. Moving forward now will put us on track to conduct the auction in 2018.

I appreciate your interest in this matter and I look forward to continue working with you as the Commission moves towards holding the CAF Phase II reverse auction. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

July 18, 2017

The Honorable Claire McCaskill
United States Senate
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator McCaskill:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's Connect America Fund (CAF) Phase II competitive bidding process. I agree that moving the auction process forward is an important part of our efforts to close the digital divide. Your views will be entered into the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

In my first remarks to FCC staff as Chairman on January 24, I declared that my highest priority would be making sure every American who wants Internet access can get it. As you well know, if you live in rural America, there's a better than 1-in-4 chance that you lack access to fixed high-speed broadband at home, compared to a 1-in-50 probability in our cities. The bottom line is this: Rural Americans deserve the same digital access as those living in more urban areas.

That's why I was pleased to announce that August will be Rural Broadband Month at the FCC. Our agenda for the open meeting on August 3 will feature several items that will help bridge the digital divide, including a Public Notice to initiate the pre-auction process for the CAF Phase II Auction.

Following the Commission's bipartisan vote on February 23, the auction will offer almost \$2 billion over the next ten years to broadband providers that commit to offer voice and broadband services to fixed locations in unserved high-cost areas in our country. As you note, the auction rules are structured to induce new entrants to participate—competitive entrants like wireless Internet service providers, small-town cable operators, and electric utilities. The *CAF II Auction Order* adopted auction weights designed to give every bidder—no matter what technology they use—a meaningful opportunity to compete for federal funds, while ensuring the best value for the American taxpayer. With this Public Notice, we are seeking comment on the procedures to be used during this auction. Moving forward now will put us on track to conduct the auction in 2018.

I appreciate your interest in this matter and I look forward to continue working with you as the Commission moves towards holding the CAF Phase II reverse auction. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

July 18, 2017

The Honorable Jason Smith
U.S. House of Representatives
1118 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Smith:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's Connect America Fund (CAF) Phase II competitive bidding process. I agree that moving the auction process forward is an important part of our efforts to close the digital divide. Your views will be entered into the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

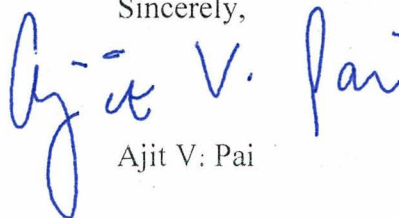
In my first remarks to FCC staff as Chairman on January 24, I declared that my highest priority would be making sure every American who wants Internet access can get it. As you well know, if you live in rural America, there's a better than 1-in-4 chance that you lack access to fixed high-speed broadband at home, compared to a 1-in-50 probability in our cities. The bottom line is this: Rural Americans deserve the same digital access as those living in more urban areas.

That's why I was pleased to announce that August will be Rural Broadband Month at the FCC. Our agenda for the open meeting on August 3 will feature several items that will help bridge the digital divide, including a Public Notice to initiate the pre-auction process for the CAF Phase II Auction.

Following the Commission's bipartisan vote on February 23, the auction will offer almost \$2 billion over the next ten years to broadband providers that commit to offer voice and broadband services to fixed locations in unserved high-cost areas in our country. As you note, the auction rules are structured to induce new entrants to participate—competitive entrants like wireless Internet service providers, small-town cable operators, and electric utilities. The *CAF II Auction Order* adopted auction weights designed to give every bidder—no matter what technology they use—a meaningful opportunity to compete for federal funds, while ensuring the best value for the American taxpayer. With this Public Notice, we are seeking comment on the procedures to be used during this auction. Moving forward now will put us on track to conduct the auction in 2018.

I appreciate your interest in this matter and I look forward to continue working with you as the Commission moves towards holding the CAF Phase II reverse auction. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

July 18, 2017

The Honorable Ann Wagner
U.S. House of Representatives
435 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Wagner:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's Connect America Fund (CAF) Phase II competitive bidding process. I agree that moving the auction process forward is an important part of our efforts to close the digital divide. Your views will be entered into the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

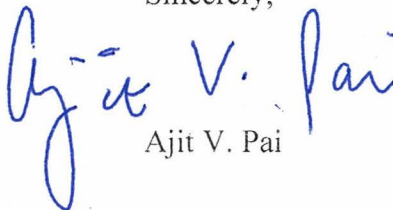
In my first remarks to FCC staff as Chairman on January 24, I declared that my highest priority would be making sure every American who wants Internet access can get it. As you well know, if you live in rural America, there's a better than 1-in-4 chance that you lack access to fixed high-speed broadband at home, compared to a 1-in-50 probability in our cities. The bottom line is this: Rural Americans deserve the same digital access as those living in more urban areas.

That's why I was pleased to announce that August will be Rural Broadband Month at the FCC. Our agenda for the open meeting on August 3 will feature several items that will help bridge the digital divide, including a Public Notice to initiate the pre-auction process for the CAF Phase II Auction.

Following the Commission's bipartisan vote on February 23, the auction will offer almost \$2 billion over the next ten years to broadband providers that commit to offer voice and broadband services to fixed locations in unserved high-cost areas in our country. As you note, the auction rules are structured to induce new entrants to participate—competitive entrants like wireless Internet service providers, small-town cable operators, and electric utilities. The *CAF II Auction Order* adopted auction weights designed to give every bidder—no matter what technology they use—a meaningful opportunity to compete for federal funds, while ensuring the best value for the American taxpayer. With this Public Notice, we are seeking comment on the procedures to be used during this auction. Moving forward now will put us on track to conduct the auction in 2018.

I appreciate your interest in this matter and I look forward to continue working with you as the Commission moves towards holding the CAF Phase II reverse auction. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Ajit V. Pai